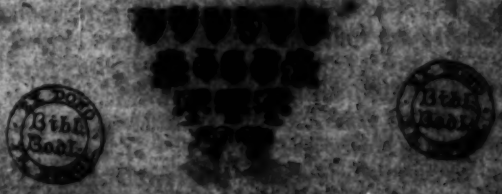
DISCOURSE AGAINST PURGATORY.



Bibl. Scot.

DUBLIN,
Re-printed by *Andrew Crook* and *Samuel Helsham*, for *Joseph Howes* at the *Kings Arms*, *Samuel Helsham* at the *Colledge-Arms*, and *Ebipbal Dobson* at the *Bible Arms* in *Castle-Street*, 1686.

DISCOURSE

AGAINST

PURGATORY.

DUBLIN,

Re-printed by Andrew Crook and Samuel Helsham, for Joseph Homes at the Kings Arms, Samuel Helsham at the College-Gate, and Elphal Dodson at the Bible and Crown in Castle-Street. 1686.

A DISCOURSE AGAINST PURGATORY.

AMong all the Errours of the Church of *Rome*, the Superstructures he hath made of *his* own head upon the Fundamental Doctrine of Christianity; this Fable of Purgatory is one of the most notorious, invented on purpose to enervate the Practice of the Church, by putting the grossest abuses upon the ignorant and wilful People: over whom the Pope got such an absolute dominion, as that he can make them believe what he pleases, and then can impose her additions to the Word of God, as infallible Doctrine. How easily are the multitude led into by-paths, when the right Light of Scripture is taken away from their eyes, which God revealed on purpose, that by the lowest degree they might find eternal Life. For the Scriptures are the most full and complete System of Gods Laws, the most sufficient and certain means of Man's Salvation. It cannot then but wonder how it came to pass, that this middle state, called Purgatory, being the only between Heaven and Hell, was not known to the Penmen of Holy Writ; or if it were known, that they should either be so envious of the Elected's happiness, or so forgetful of the work they took in hand, which was to write the whole Gospel of Christ, as not to mention as much as one of them a syllable of this place. But this new Doctrine, with many others, was introduced when the World was in the dark, for in the Ninth and tenth Centuries such a general ignorance and stupidity had seized the minds of men, that scarce any one knew what the Doctrine of Christ was: when the World was thus stupid and superstitious, Men were inclined to believe strange things: upon this fair opportunity, some cunning Men grew

drew the simple People into the belief of the most absurd Doctrines, under the notion of being great and profound Mysteries; the Gallantry of Faith, they imagined, was mightily shewn, in swallowing downright Contradictions: when this breach was once made upon the Minds of Men, then any Errour might enter, though as senseless and ridiculous as *Purgatory* it self.

Which Opinion will first serve to have no foundation in the Canonical Scripture.

Secondly, For what reasons it was introduced.

Thirdly, What we are to believe in this matter.

Lastly, I shall conclude with some Reflections upon the Authors of this, and other new-invented Doctrines in the Church of *Rome*.

First I am to prove, that this Opinion hath no foundation in Scripture. The *Papists* themselves [illegible] enough of this; therefore they put all the false *glosses* they can upon it, that the People may discern nothing in the Scripture it self, though it be as clear as the Sun: for by this craft they uphold their living, as *Demetrius* and his *Craftsmen* had heretofore. But let us fairly and honestly lay open the Books of God to every ones eye, without any unreasonable interpretations, or spurious additions [illegible] and I doubt not but the vanity of asserting *Purgatory* will soon appear.

Now in *Scripture* there are matters of a different nature,

I. Ancient Records, the History of former Times; and these things were far better known then they are now at this distance of time.

II. There are things that are wholly expired and out of date, and so of no use to us, as the whole [illegible] *Purgatory* [illegible] their eyes which [illegible]

III. In *Scripture* there are matters of Prophecy fitted for those times, which they then far better understood than we do now, and wherein they were far more concerned than we are; for they are *translations* part of the things performed, which when fulfilled were best understood.

IV. There are matters of deep *Philosophy*, as well as great Mysteries, which do not belong to the nature of Religion.

Lastly, There is the moral part of Religion, and our Saviour's Doctrines in which true Religion consists; and this is that Doctrine, which hath brought *Life and Immortality to light*, but hath not revealed any such thing as *Purgatory*, which will appear if we consider what *Bellarmine* hath alleged in the defence thereof, both out of the *Old* and *New Testament*. According to him the Texts for *Purgatory* in the Old Testament are first the Fasting of *David* for *Saul* and *Jonathan*, 2 *Sam.* 1. 12. and again 2 *Sam.* 3. 35. for the death of *Abner*. Which Fasting of *David* must be as he fancies, for the obtaining of something for them

at

at Gods hands after their death, and when nothing can be obtained for Mens Souls that are already in Heaven or Hell, it follows, that some Mens Souls are in neither of those places, but must be in *Purgatory*.

We answer, that Mourning and Fasting were never practised upon a design of procuring thereby any benefit to the Deceased: but they were Customs only, and *Ceremonies* made use of to testifie the Honour and Respect they had for their Friends departed; and all Nations have had their particular ways of discharging their last Duty to their Friends, when they have left this World, without any thought of doing them any service thereby in the World to come. The *Cardinal* is not contented with this Argument, but he produces other places of the Old Testament to support his Opinion; in the behalf whereof he cites almost every Text, wherein there is the word *purge*, or *burning*, or *purging*, or *cleansing*: it were an infinite task to answer every thing he alledges, and altogether needless, because there is not in any one of them any shew or colour of proof in any one of them. Therefore we will pass to those Texts of the *New Testament*, which he says are for him.

First, He alledges that of St. *Matthew*, 12. 32. *Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor that which is to come.* This *world to come*, if you will believe him, must needs be *Purgatory*. Now by the *world to come*, nothing else is meant in Scripture, but that everlasting state which we shall enter upon after death, in which all agree there shall be no middle state between that of Heaven and the other of Hell; therefore the *World to come* and *Purgatory* are inconsistent: for one Scripture is the best Comment upon another; so that this way of expression, [illegible] neither in this World, nor that which is to come, is made easie and plain by St. *Mark* 3. [illegible] now this manner of Expression in St. *Matthew*, [illegible] it shall not be forgiven him neither in *this world*, nor in that which is *to come*, signifies just so much, and no more, as [illegible] hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal Damnation; as much as to say, this sin is of that malignant and heinous nature, that it justly deserves endless punishment, and will never be pardoned.

The next is that of the 1 *Cor.* 3. *They themselves shall be saved, but so as by fire*, or *but as through fire*; which Fire (he says) must be the Fire of *Purgatory*. We answer, that these words seem to allude to those of *Zachar.* 13. 9. where he saith, *I will bring the third part through fire, and refine them, as Silver is refined*; which is a fair warning to men, that

Doctrine

Doctrines they embrace, and their Practices according to them, may be such as will bear the severest tryal, that they may not be like *wood, hay* and *stubble*, which will not endure the fire; for the particle (ὡς) is a particle of similitude, and the whole phrase, οὕτως δὲ ὡς, is proverbially used in Scripture as well as in other Authors, to signifie a narrow escape out of a great danger; just as St. *Peter* expresses it, 1 *Ep.* 3. 20. σωθῆναι δι' ὕδατος, so here it is διὰ πυρὸς, he shall be saved with great difficulty, so as through fire.

III. A third place is that of 1 *Cor.* 15. concerning *Baptism for the dead*, from the *Cardinal* ventures very far, even to the drawing of fire out of water, the *flames* of *Purgatory* out of these *washings*: Baptism for the Dead and Prayer for the Dead is the same thing in his sense; though it be discordant to the harmony and scope of the whole Scripture. For the word βαπτίζω in Scripture signifies to wash, or purifie by washing; it must be rendred in the Jewish Rites: for as all Nations had their peculiar Rites of Burial, so had the Jews, who were used to wash the Carkasses of the Dead with *warm Water, Camomile* and *dried Roses*, being put into it. This βάπτισμα, or use of Baptisation was threefold: The first, ἀπὸ μιάσματος, a washing from the pollution contracted by the touch of the dead Carkass. The second was βάπτισμα νεκροῦ, a washing of the dead Corpse it self, as *Tabitha* was washed. The last was the Baptisation in the Text, βάπτισμα ὑπὲρ νεκρῶν, in use only among some misguided Christians: for the Apostle undertook to convince the *Corinthians* of the truth of the Resurrection, from their own foolish and erroneous Customs; in effect telling them, that their usage of baptizing the *living* for the *dead*, was vain and impertinent, if there were no Resurrection: for if the Dead rise not at all, to what end were these Funeral Solemnities? Why was there *vicarium illud Baptisma*, as *Tertullian* calls it? the manner whereof is thus described by *Epiphanius*: When any *Catechumenist* dyed, some living person, being placed under the *Bed*, they came to the deceased party, and asked him whether he would be baptized; the *Party under the Bed* answered, that he would; whereupon they immediately baptized him *for the dead*: a silly superstitious action! Yet from this Topick St. *Paul* proves a Resurrection to them, as he did once the existence of the true God, from an Inscription on an Altar in *Athens*, to one *that was unknown*: but *Bellarmine* would perswade us, that by this washing they intended to afford their Friends some relief in *Purgatory*, and he might with as much reason have told us, that the Sea [illegible]

IV. The fourth place is that of St. *Matth.* 5. 25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou*

thou be cast into prison; verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. Now if the Cardinal may be credited, *Purgatory* is this Prison, and the Prisoner shut up therein, is in a condition to pay the uttermost farthing, by the help of Prayers, Masses, and the Pope's Indulgence: whereas all this is an Allegory, whereby we are taught to reconcile our selves to God, the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, by leading a Godly, Righteous and Sober Life, whilst we are in the way, or on this side the Grave; for if we neglect our Repentance and amendment of Life in this our day, before the night approaches, wherein *no man can work*; we run the hazard of being cast into a *prison*, out of which there is no Redemption; for the Text says, *We shall by no means come out thence, till we have paid the uttermost farthing*; which will be never, because we shall never be able to discharge this Debt. We are infinitely beholding to the Goodness and Mercy of God, who hath appointed his only begotten Son to be our Surety, and to deliver us out of this Prison; how justly then may the Saviour of the World be angry with *Papists*, for pretending to cast simple people into I know not what Prison, and to torture them with painted Fires, in spight of that Redemption which he hath made for the whole World?

V. The fifth place is that of *Matthew* 5. 22. *Whosoever is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the Judgement, and whosoever shall say to his Brother, Racha, shall be in danger of the Council: but whosoever shall say, thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell Fire.* The last only of these sins *Bellarmine* observes, shall be punished with Hell Fire; consequently after this life, the punishment of lesser sins will be in *Purgatory*. But this is no true inference; because after this life, there will be no distinction of Courts of Justice, as there was among the *Jews* in our Saviour's time; then all Judicature shall appertain to Christ and his Apostles; therefore this Text cannot be rightly understood without considering the words before and after it. Now our Saviour in this Chapter was about to interpret the Law of *Moses*, which the *Jews* thought they had fulfilled, when they had not transgressed the Grammatical sense thereof; this made them believe that the Sixth Commandment was not broken, but by killing a Man; nor the Seventh, but by actually committing Adultery or Fornication: whereas our Saviour forbids the inward Anger of a Man against his Brother without a cause, the punishment whereof at the Day of Judgment shall be Hell Fire. How *Purgatory* then should be maintained from these words, I cannot imagine, unless the *Papists* can make it out, that as the *Jews* had divers temporal Courts of Justice, so God Almighty will have three distinct Courts of Justice hereafter, and will inflict different punishments for Sin.

VI. The

VI. The fifth place is *Luk.* 16. *Make to your friends of the unrighteous Mammon, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* Invocation of Saints, the Papists say, may be proved from this Text, but I cannot see upon what grounds. We are advised to make the Poor our Friends by Charity, and by giving them some of our Riches that we may have in this life the benefit of their Prayers, and thereby make God himself our Debtor; for *he that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord.*

Lastly; The Champions for Popery allege for *Purgatory*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. *By which also he went and preached to the Spirits in prison*, by which they understand the Descent of Christ into *Purgatory*, to loose some Souls there from their Torments. But 1. by which, relates to *Spirit*, that is set down just before it; by which Spirit in *Noah*, who is called a *Preacher of Righteousness*. Christ Jesus is said to preach to the Generation of Men immediately before the Flood, whose Souls are now shut up in Hell for their Disobedience. For this Preaching was not performed by an immediate act of the Son of God, as if he personally had appeared on Earth, and actually preached to the Old World; but he did it by the Ministry of a Prophet: for to do any thing by another, that is not able to perform it without him, as much demonstrates the existence of the principal cause, as if he did it of himself without any intervening instrument. But if *Purgatory* be intended in these words, we must be mightily mistaken in our conceptions about a future State; then the days that follow after Death do afford opportunities of obtaining a better Life; then may Men rise from a life of Torments to a life of Joy; whereas the Angels had one Instant, either to stand or fall eternally; what that Instant was to them, that this Life is to us; for after Death immediately follows Judgment; the Soul at its departure from the Body, knows its doom; and what it must trust to for ever. The Schoolmen labour all they can to destroy the true Belief of Christians in this matter, and have the face to propose it as a matter of Faith, that Christ delivered the Souls of the Saints from the very Suburbs of Hell, which they call *Limbus Patrum*. It is pity but the Wits of these Men had been better employed, than in building such Castles in the Air, or in filling mens Thoughts with imaginary Ideas of strange places in the other World, that have no foundation in Scripture; which is our surest Guide against all such Notional wandrings, opens our eyes to perceive the reality of things, and clears the Brain, not only from Darkness, but from false and useless Light, especially the *Ignis fatuus* of *Purgatory*; which serves only to mislead Men out of the way, and so lose them in the Bogs or Woods of perpetual Errour; which teaches us to believe quite otherwise

than

that the Papists do ; for such as these are the Instructions of the Ho[ly] Spirit, Matth. 5. 29. *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* Matth. 18. 8. *Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands and two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.* Matth. 19. 29. *And every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* Matth. 25. 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting.* In the 16th Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, from the nineteenth to the one and thirtieth Verse, we read how the Rich man was cast into torments, and the Poor man lodged in Abraham's Bosome: between the place of which two Men, there was *a great*, a wide Gulph, never to be passed by any, but by Death; that Door of despair of any relief out of his misery, when the gift of a drop of water to cool his tongue would not be granted him. If we can attend to what the Papists say, they have paved a large Causeway over this wide Gulph, and have opened a very safe passage from a life of Torments to that of eternal Happiness. For by virtue of their Prayers, Oblations and Indulgences, they have made the way broad to Heaven, and narrow to Hell; a Man that hath Money in his pocket cannot be damned; and a Camel may as soon pass through the eye of a needle, as a poor man be saved.

But granting that the written Word of God hath nothing of Purgatory in it, the *Romanists* will tell you, that *Tradition* will defend them in the belief thereof; which word, *Tradition*, they are wont to allege to give a colour to most of their present Innovations.

Wherefore in the second place I am to shew how they are mistaken in this case of *Tradition* also, and to declare for what reasons the Fiction of Purgatory was first set on foot. The *Traditions* we receive as good and authentick, and the Doctrines which we now read in the holy Scriptures, when I have proved *Purgatory* to be none of these; therefore that of the *Romanists* must mean some other *Tradition*, that is not to be found written in the Word of God. But here we ought to observe, that the Scripture in this case, as well as in all others is the only Rule of Faith; therefore *Traditions*, *Councils* and *Fathers* are only to be used as helps to understand the Scripture better, but not to be entertained as any Rule of Faith; in which case we are bound to be of the Apostle's mind, *Gal.* 1. 8. *If an Angel from Heaven preach any other Doctrine than that which we have delivered, let him be accursed.* For this reason we cannot receive such Doctrines for truth, which the Church of *Rome* presses upon us to

upon the account of Tradition; especially when we consider with what stratagems of force and fraud this Church hath laboured to keep the People in ignorance for the sake of her New Doctrines, that they may be hallowed the more glibly; which is an artifice to enslave Mankind, by disabling them either to see or know what she is a doing; whereas if they could keep up the honour and priviledge of humane Nature, if we would preserve our Bibles from being sequestred into Hucksters hands, if we have any regard to Gods pure and undefiled Religion, we must be on our guard against the Novelties of Popery. For in the true Religion, there is no thing which the Reason of Mankind can challenge, wherein the Judgments of the wise may not have so good an account, as to receive full and ample satisfaction. And to speak the truth, I do not understand that there is any Religion further than that which is owned among Protestants: what name it is to be found among the Papists, is accommodated for some private ends and purposes. For this reason, a great Abbot in the Roman Church was wont to say, that he did greatly suspect his Religion must needs fail, being not built upon so firm a Rock as was supposed; because there was so little Ground for many Tenets of it in the Word of God. I suppose, that there is as little in the principles of Gods Creatures, for in that which we call Natural Religion.

If this be so, I wonder with what face they can still stand up for Purgatory, or imagine such a state, in which the Souls of Men are for a time shut up, until they are set at liberty by the Prayers of the Living, or a Papal Indulgence: but to justifie themselves in this unpardonable abuse of the Christian Religion, they tell us, that some Christians in old Time desired the use of Prayers and Commemorations for those who died in the true Faith of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Now the question is, whether those Christians that used this kind of Devotion, intended by these means to obtain a Pardon for the Criminals that were condemned to this Prison. If the right understanding of this Custom will put an end to the Controversie, and who can better inform us of their meaning than they themselves, or those that lived in the same Age with them, although what may be reckoned *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, who treats particularly of the Rites used in their Burials of the Dead: this Author tells us, that the Bishop was present in the midst of the Congregation to make a Prayer of Thanksgiving unto God for his restraining the Power of the Devil over Mankind; as also for his merciful admittance of sincere Penitents into his Grace and Favour. And further prays, that God would place them in the Land of the Living, seat them in *Abraham's* Bosom, where now they rest from their Labours here, they may be received into a place of Light, Peace and Joy everlasting: this was the end of their Prayers for those

that rest in the Lord. Now, left we should be mistaken here from hence, as if we did believe, that the Souls of good Men departed were not yet in Paradise, but remain for some time in a condition of darkness and pain; there to be prepared for Heaven by certain Purgations, and thence to be discharged by the Satisfactions and Prayers of the Living: the same excellent Writer hath mentioned only two Divisions of the Dead; of those that have died well, and of those that have died ill, as the upholders of Purgatory have lodged them in three distinct Apartments. But the Primitive Church knew but two places of Entertainment for the Dead after this Life, Heaven, and Hell; the first for the good, the latter for evil Men; one for the Believer, the other for the unbelieving. Heaven is for him whose sins are remitted, and Hell is for him whose sins are retained. Indeed some ancient Doctors did teach, that there was a place where the Souls of Men did abide, till they should be reunited to their Bodies in the Resurrection, happening for a while they knew not how. But afterwards the Church of Rome found it more profitable to build for them this place of Purgatory, a place wherein the pretence the Souls of Men are cleansed by burning, and made fit for Heaven.

For as soon as the World was put into a great Fright about Purgatory, then came in the Sale of Indulgences, which the Apostle Peter never knew, Securities against the vain fears and dangers to be met with in this place: this indeed is a Doctrine of good Advantage to the Church of Rome, but most disgraceful to the Christian Religion, for what can be more so, than to deny and Christ hath purchased the Pardon which he ever had, of being the only Redeemer of Mankind, as if he had not by his Sacrifice on the Cross fully satisfied the Divine Justice, but that this great work was to be done by Popes Bulls, Indulgences and Masses? But all this we will oblige our selves to believe, the Roman Confessors, if they can from Scripture, Reason, or unwritten Tradition how or where God hath told Men, that he is pleased with these things, and is resolved to accept of them instead of a good and Christian Life. For this was always the Faith of the Primitive Church, that the state and condition of a Man into which he falleth after Death shall never be changed, that I could prove out of Justin Martyr ad Orthodoxos, and out of St. Cyprian ad Demetrianum, but my Design is not to fill this brief Discourse with Quotations, and indeed there is no necessity for it, because we have Scripture, the common Sense of Mankind, and the Faith of the best and purest Ages on our side.

Wherefore in the third place, I will shew what our Belief ought to be in this matter. We all know very well, that we are to believe as the Scripture directs, and herein we are taught that Heaven and Hell are fixed

and for all the *vain hopes* of good and bad Men; who if after this Life there be any hopes of gaining the Holy, or escaping the Unholy, by the help of the Gifts of their flattering Friends, that expectation would in a great measure frustrate the intent of Christs coming into the world, which was to teach Men how in *this present life* they muſt work out their Salvation, how through patient continuance in well-doing they muſt here be brought to goodneſs and real vertue, the practice whereof in all probability would be quite laid aside, if they ſhould depend upon ſuch foolish hopes as theſe are. If we do but conſider the reaſon of thoſe Promiſes and Threatnings, which God makes uſe of in Scripture to reclaim the Diſobedient, we muſt be convinced, that there can be no ſuch place as *Purgatory*. For Promiſes and Threatnings are made uſe of in Scripture to work upon our hopes and fears, even the moſt prevailing paſſions of Mankind; as we have the promiſe of preſent aſſiſtance to encourage our endeavours in a vertuous life, and ſo make this work the more eaſie, we have the aſſurance of a future Reward. Whereas religion would be brought into the ſtate of *Satans* Kingdom too heavy for Men to bear, if for all they ſhould here entertain the hopes of getting to Heaven by their *Prayers* and *Maſſes* at the Church of *Rome* preſcribes; perſons that are her Profeſſors muſt not be affrighted from by that fear, which is the proper product of the Threatnings of the Goſpel, when the moſt dreadful conditions that poſſibly can befall a ſinner may be avoided, as they think, by the *Charms* of *Prieſts*, and the *Lazars* of the *Church*. But theſe are *eternally denied* to the Sinners which the Scripture warns us of; which Goſpel, because of the terrors of it, is ſaid to be the *mighty Power of God to Salvation*; for great and mighty indeed is it, it awakens all our powers, and quickens all our motions, it turns our feet into wings, and enables Men to do many things with eaſe, which without ſo ſtrong a motive they would never be perſwaded to attempt. The lively apprehenſion of the danger of their Souls, and the fad effects of a wicked life is enough to make the moſt profane Man ſtop his career, it will incite him to ſummon all his powers to reſiſt ſo great a miſchief as will undo him for ever. Beſides the Commands of God are exceedingly ſweetned by Love, by all the imaginable obligations of Kindneſs; when we have conſidered how undutifully we have demeaned our ſelves towards him who is the great Benefactor of our life, who hath recovered us from eternal deſtruction; with how much long-ſuffering he hath expected our amendment; what means he hath uſed to reconcile us to himſelf, by ſending his only begotten Son to die, that we might live, to be made a ſpectacle of miſery and contempt, that he might bring us to happineſs and glory: he only hath delivered us from Wrath and the Torments, when we lay open to the revenge of Gods Juſtice. If

we

[illegible] benefit; we cannot chuse but love and obey him who hath done so much to oblige us: for the whole Religion presents such arguments and considerations to us as are apt to stir up all those passions in our hearts, which are the great instruments to action; these are our hope, fear and love. But the workings of these passions must needs be filled by *slavish, superstitious devotion*, I mean the devotion of the Papists, which is *producing effects of such a nature as* [illegible]

Let us therefore that are Protestants consider, that the main work we are to do in the time of this life, is to prepare for our immortal state; for the time of this life is the day of exercise, wherein we are to make trial of our strength, and with all our powers to labour for Heaven, the way to which place lies right before us, it is strait and narrow, so that we must use some care and diligence, that we turn not to the right, nor to the left; the ways of Popery are like the paths of the crooked and full of windings through *Cells* and *Cloysters*, in long *Processions* and *Pilgrimages*, wherewith Men are rather perplexed than their minds are improved, or their lives made better; by the practice of these things they are brought off from the the true meaning of the Christian Religion, and learn to take to content themselves with pompous shews instead of *living righteously, soberly and godly in this present world*; for how can the end of Religion be accomplished by this course, when in the place of justice, honesty and goodness, simple and plain virtues, the people are brought up to these so many tricks, and to act over so many *external* [illegible] of Worship [illegible]

But the life to God, *we have in Jesus Christ*, we came not into the world to be idle spectators thereof, to be slothful and unprofitable *Members*, to gratifie our senses, feed our lusts, or to live as we list, but to pay a *reasonable service to God*, and to procure the publick good; not to advance our own advantages and designs, but the common interest and benefit of Mankind. And as we are not to neglect our duty upon which the saving of our Souls depends, in expectation, that after this life is ended we may get *out of Purgatory* into Heaven; so we must not mistake our time of doing our duty, but begin it, as soon as we come to the use of our reason and understanding, that as soon as our rational *powers* begin to move, Religion also may shew it self at the same time with all the Brightness and Majesty of truth and vertue. Therefore Men do mightily abuse themselves when they are led aside by erroneous opinions concerning their future state, and so lose the happy occasion of advancing their true interest: this they do, who put off their living well to the last, who defer their Repentance with groundless hopes of having the same good success as the penitent Thief had, or who neglect all those good means that would make them sound & good Christians out of a false perswasion, that their sufferings here after will be but temporary, & then they shall be as happy as the best Men are. Some

are

C

the

and Excellent in Authority, if this be true, then the blame of all this [illegible] upon our blessed Saviour for revealing such a Doctrine to the World as this, and likewise upon the Apostles for making known such a Doctrine to Mankind Unnecessary and Useless; but I hope the People are not willing to lay all the miscarriages of the World upon Christ and his Apostles. Although Men may abuse the Knowledge of the Scripture, yet the abuse of a thing that is useful, was never accounted a sufficient reason for the taking it away: therefore Men are not to be hindred from the Knowledge of the Scriptures, for fear they should become proud, or rebellious; for this would be as if one should put out his eyes, that he might the better follow him, or that he might not lose his way: for there is nothing in the whole Doctrine of our blessed Saviour, which is unfit for any man to know, but what is plainly designed to promote Holiness and the Practice of a good life; the Reasons do indeed presume, that the Unity and Peace of the Church cannot be maintained, unless the People be kept in ignorance; then the means will be that for the end of keeping Peace and Unity in the Church, Church and Christian will be both lost; which would be, as if a Prince should lose all his Subjects on the head of keeping them quiet. It is true, this would be an effectual way to procure [illegible] but then the Prince must lose his Kingdom, and make himself [illegible] no doubt, but if Men were ignorant enough [illegible] but then the [illegible] were very [illegible]

[illegible] that lawful, which is [illegible] that the Pope [illegible] change the [illegible] by this pretended Power [illegible] they can make [illegible] and hanged [illegible] they can make [illegible] change of mind, and true [illegible] but I know not what [illegible] Holy Water, and the [illegible] they [illegible] Absolution from [illegible] for the [illegible] detract from the [illegible] prepare us for, and at last to bring us to Heaven, which we [illegible] this [illegible] deceived,

deceived, whilst they couple *Prayer for the Dead* and *Purgatory*, together as the one did essentially depend on the other. But they do not deny, that though the sins of the Elect be privately and particularly forgiven at the day of Death, yet the publick Promulgation of their Pardon is to come at the day of Judgment. Christians then may be allowed to pray for this Confirmation of Blessedness, when the Body shall be united to the Soul, so often as we say, *Thy Kingdom come*, or *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*. This is far enough from being a Prayer to deliver them out of *Purgatory*; Nothing the Church is able to produce any one Prayer, publick or private, now 600 Millenaries, for the delivery of any one Soul out of *Purgatory*, in all the primitive times, out of their own ancient *Missals* or Records.

All these things before mentioned are sooner to be satisfied, but that the Papists have endeavoured to [illegible] that ever was made known unto Men. Wherein the Christian Religion, as it is professed in the *Reformed Church*, is quite another thing: for it doth neither persecute, nor hold any principles or Faction of Disturbance, but only those of Peace and Obedience to the Laws of God and Men: If there be any agitators of Mischief and Treason, it is the fault of particular Persons, and not to be charged upon the *Reformed Church*, wherein Christian holily the Worship of God and all other Offices of Religion [illegible] formed in the vulgar Tongue, so that knowledge may be thereby [illegible] promoted; which Knowledge of Religion if any man doth abuse [illegible] ends of Faction, Rebellion, Treason, &c. it is to his own peril, and God will judge him for it: But St. Paul is so far from allowing any [illegible] to disobey [illegible] Powers, that he tells us plainly, 1 Cor. 12. 29. *If the whole Church be come together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?* that is, they will look upon it as ridiculous, that any Society of Men professing the Religion of Christians, should ecclesiastically assemble for the Christian Church, which St. Paul hath said is [illegible]. The [illegible] Reformed Church owns the freedom of the Scriptures, both in publick & private, calls upon Men, as our Saviour did, to search them; for these make the man of God perfect, and do richly furnish him for every good work; and by their help are reasonable creatures made wise unto Salvation. We do declare, that the Preachers of the Church ought not to take away the Key of Knowledge from the people, as our Saviour charged the Pharisees for so doing: Nor do we command Faith implicite, or [illegible] Superiority, but [illegible] Offices to direct and give Counsel to their Flocks or Parishes, but in Compassion to their infirmities may [illegible] Charity [illegible] mistakes

in short, we tell the people, that the Scripture is the only rule of their faith, that it is full and perspicuous in all matters necessary for good life and practice; so that if they use diligence, and mind it well, they may certainly understand them, and be satisfied: we never desire any implicit faith from them, neither do we expect that they should resign up their faculties, as others believe blindfold and without reason. Therefore the Reformed Church is honest in all its dealings, doth not deceive men by any ways of fraud or falshood, such as the whole Doctrine of Merit is, and the Redemption of Souls out of Purgatory by Masses. But there is no place in the world where Contracts venale Dolique Heaven and God himself is set to sale.

The premisses considered, we may conclude, that the Church of England had good reason to declare under twenty second Article, that The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relicks, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

For the whole Scripture is against Purgatory, wherein we read, 1 John 1. 7. That the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; that the Christians who dye in Christ, are rest from their labours; that as they are absent from the Lord, while they are in the body, so when they are absent from the body, they are present with the Lord, Joh. 3. 29. that they come not into judgment, but pass from Death unto Life. Now which I pray you is more contrary to Purgatory, which Knowledge, or Ignorance? Which Faith, or Infidelity? Which Hope, or Despair? Which Love, or Hatred of God? Which Peace, or Disturbance? Which Comfort, or Affliction of Conscience? Which Assurance of Salvation, or Fear of Damnation? Which Confidence, or Diffidence, and Distrust in God? Which Boldness, or Fearfulness at the hour of Death? Which Quietness, or Impatience in Tribulation? Which Readiness, or Unwillingness to depart out of this life? Which Desire, or Loathing to be with Christ? Which Thanksgiving, or Murmuring against God? Which Glorifying, or Blaspheming of God in his Saints and Elect? Which Good Example, or Offence of our Neighbour? Which Edifying, or Destruction of the Church? Which Truth, or Lie? Which Light, or Darkness? Which Life, or Death? Which Heaven, or Hell? Which Christ, or Belial? Which God, or the Devil? Which Good Angels, or Evil Spirits? Which Blessed Saints, or Damned Souls? Which Elect, or Reprobate? Which Children of God, or Children of the Devil? Which Members of Christ, or Members of Antichrist? Which Spouse of Christ, or Whore of Babylon? Which Kingdom of Christ, or Kingdom of Satan? Which Holy Ghost, or Unclean Spirit? Which Sanctification, or Uncleanness? Which Regeneration, or Corruption? Which Mortification of the Flesh, or Quickening of the Flesh? Which Crucifying of the Old Man, or Nourishing of the Old Man? Which Newness of Life, or Oldness of Life? Which Conformity to the Image of Christ, or Deformity? Which Putting on Christ, or Putting on Antichrist? Which Walking in the Spirit, or Walking in the Flesh? Which Fruits of the Spirit, or Fruits of the Flesh? Which Spiritual Mindedness, or Carnal Mindedness? Which Mortifying of the Members which are upon the Earth, or Living after the Flesh? Which Crucifying of the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts, or Living after the Lusts of the Flesh? Which Dying unto Sin, or Living in Sin? Which Dying with Christ, or Living with Antichrist? Which Rising with Christ, or Rising with Antichrist? Which Seeking the Things which are above, or Seeking the Things which are below? Which Setting our Affections on the Things above, or Setting our Affections on the Things below? Which Setting our Affections on Things in Heaven, or Setting our Affections on Things in Earth? Which Hiding our Life with Christ in God, or Hiding our Life with Antichrist in the Devil? Which Appearing with Christ in Glory, or Appearing with Antichrist in Shame? Which Mortifying of our

our departure, be the more grieved, because so long as we remain here we are Pilgrims from God.

I could cite more Fathers to this purpose; but the Testimonies of these may suffice to shew, that all were not of *Bellarmine*'s mind, as he pretends by his precarious assertion, that *Antiquity* constantly taught there was a *Purgatory*. Whatever the *Orientals* are to be from being of his Opinion, they do not believe it at this day. The Greek and Latin Authors, that I know to be on his side, are *Plato* in his *Gorgias* and *Phædo*, *Virgil* in the end of the Dream of *Scipio*, and *Dante* in his Poem of *Hell*. This last, when he was an Heretick, seemed to favour his opinion, and *Dante* was very much of that belief, who acknowledges no other punishment after this life, but *Purgatory* alone. Notwithstanding the *Romish* Clergy have the confidence to impose this extravagant Doctrine upon the World, now it was never heard of in the Church for the space of a thousand years after the Birth of our Saviour; when *Thomas Aquinas* and other Friars had framed the Chair, the Doctors of the *Greek* Church did publickly oppose it: afterwards the Pope and his Agents prevailed so far in the Council at *Florence*, that for Peace sake they were contented to yield; *That the middle sort of Souls were in a State of Punishment*, in which they were *Pius Decimus*, *Trajan*, or *Somebody else*, they would not dispute. But as I have said, the Greek Church, the *Nestorians* and *Eutychians*, the *Copticks* and *Jacobites*, the *Indians* and *Armenians*, could never be brought to submit.

But this Opinion, with some others no better grounded, crept into the World, when Ignorance and Interest had greatly depraved the primitive Purity of the Christian Faith and Worship. The Broachers of these Notions are very crafty and industrious in contriving what they may fasten them upon credulous people; and [illegible] this an *honest way* to love our Ancestors dearer than the Truth: yet if he doth not meet with a proportionable zeal in their Posterity to oppose his designs, it will not be hard to conjecture the success of his pious Attacque, and a safe Defence.

As therefore we are Members of a Christian Church, in which we sincerely find Salvation, if we continue in it; let us be truly thankful to our selves against all Innovators in Religion. As we profess the Rule of Faith and Practice, that the Holy Scripture; let us reject all Supervenient Innovations, that are obtruded upon us for *Fundamentals*. As we are taught to be obedient to the supreme Magistrate, not only *for Wrath*, but *Conscience sake*; so we are bound to avoid the Communion of that Church, which claims a Power of deposing him, and of knocking those on the head, who keep close to *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*.

What

What Obligations then have we to the *Church*, we are of, and to the Religion we profess, which hath delivered us from the Laws of the Roman Religion, that are written in Blood; that hath recovered us from the Superstitious practice of the heathen world; that will not suffer us to fall down to the Stock of a Tree, that doth not expose us of the Publick Prayers in a strange Tongue into an unknown Language, that enjoyns an implicite faith, or blind Obedience, but allows to *Caesar* a judgment of Discretion, and keeps us from the Bondage of Ignorance and Submission to an Infallible Superiority; that has not given to the Vulgar, or to gratifie the Imagination, [illegible] to please the Vulgar, or to gratifie the Imagination, [illegible] to impose upon the conscience of Mankind; that has no Pardons or Indulgences for guilty persons, no forged Miracles to gratify the credulous people, no [illegible] to amuse them; [illegible] Therefore we have any love of our Religion, or any concern for the happiness of our Church and Nation; if we have any desire to hold the freedom of this Conscience, or any care for the eternal safety of our Souls, it behoves us to beware of the *Snares of Rome*, in whose Success we must expect to forfeit all these Interests, every one of which ought to be dearer to us, than our *lives*.

Let us not be imposed upon by the specious Name of *Roman Catholick*; [illegible] condition, one of the Pope's Creed, as it he could lay a [illegible] Let us not be afraid to [illegible] with his Councils and Decrees, though [illegible] are a Labyrinth, an intangled Wood, where [illegible] to lose us much [illegible] or nicety, as to hide the shame of an open over- [illegible] which in this kind of contest many of our Divines have given [illegible] But let them bound their Disputations on the Scriptures only, and [illegible] Protestant well read in the Bible may turn and wind them [illegible] as among *Papists*, their ignorance in the Scriptures [illegible] uphold Popery. To among *Protestants* [illegible] ment and [illegible] therefore will soonest baffle it. And we need not doubt of success [illegible] if we add to this the amendment of our lives and [illegible] through Impenitency, Pride, Luxury, bold and open Atheism, uncharitableness and pecking at one another, through stubborn Disobedience to the Laws of God and Man, we run into that *Gulph*, which we look to avoid, the work of Superstition, that enervates and destroys the whole Design of *Christianity*.

FINIS.

[illegible] Innovations, that are obtruded upon us for [illegible] we are taught to be obedient to the Supreme Magistrate, not only for Wrath, but Conscience sake; to we are bound to avoid the Communion of that Church, which claims a Power of dispensing him, and of knocking those on the head, who keep close to the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

What